

THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION PERIODICAL DEPT.

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English and the Humanities

According to Ex-Chancellor ... the disaster which overwhelmed Germany in 1914-18 was at bottom to a failure of the humanities.

Since 1933, the fresh disaster which has overwhelmed Germany is the complete subjection of the humanities to barbaric scientized ... This disaster now threatens to become a debacle of civilization throughout the world.

The acids of modernity long ago thus open to such an attack. The positive skepticism and relativism of the Age of Science more and more destroyed the scheme of values which for many centuries imposed limits on the will to power. Even science, itself a value, perverted, the love of knowledge becoming more and more the end for greater power. In education, the aim was less and less to develop human beings, more and more to facilitate material success. Education in the sciences, natural and social, increasingly dominated, the education in the humanities feeble and confused.

Rightful misuses of science are bringing us to our senses. We are becoming aware that science is an instrument for doing what we decide to do, but not for deciding what we wish or ought to do. The time has come when a great realist, president of Harvard, is dared to affirm, in his report to trustees, that the chief task of university is "the guardianship of eternal values," and that general education must therefore be based on a study of the arts, letters, and various aspects of philosophy. This study lies the discipline of a free nation. "To the extent that education ceases to be concerned with 'value judgments' in literature or in philosophy, it ceases to be of service to the free way of life—it ceases to hold the dignity of the individual."

Success of education in any one of these fields depends largely upon success of education in the others. Study of literature cannot truly be unless it is brought into relation with philosophy, on the one hand, and the fine arts on the other, though we have assuredly regarded this fact in our teaching and our training of teachers. In success of education in one of these fields depends largely upon success in the other fields. English literature (as Chaucer Arnold said long ago) is one national expression of that federation of national cultures which has characterized the Occident since the Renaissance, and which is based on common memories.

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For One Dying Young

And so old Jones is dead. Died in class. Am Lit. I had that. The Survey too. My roomie Took Comp from him. I guess he liked Am Lit the best. A great old guy, but old. Sixty-five or seventy at least. Taught here forty years. Oh well, what's the deal? What did he have to live for, anyway? Just more teaching. Funny how alive He was. His eyes sure gleamed behind those specs. I don't see why. There was no excitement. Nothing ever happened to him. Well, Maybe he did get quite a kick from Emerson. He said so once. And that other dope, The one that went to live in the woods. Imagine! And then he used to read old Whittier to us. You know—old endlessly cradle rocking Whittier. And was he queer? I almost liked him, though, While old Jones was lecturing. Well, Who's going to buy another coke for me?

Herbert E. Childs
Oregon State College

A Course for Casuals

There have been of late a number of earnest debates about the merits and defects of the time honored survey course in literature. In nearly every instance, however, the assumption has been made that the courses under discussion, whether survey or not, are necessarily designed for the development solely of those students whose major interest is literature. It is perhaps wise to remind ourselves here that the program of literature is, or at least it should be, far more extensive than the preparation of English majors, however laudable and desirable that aim may be. Facts show that there are many students in literature courses who are there because they want the cultural exposure such courses provide, but whose bread-and-butter interest is remote from letters.

It is with these casuals that we have been much concerned. On many occasions, too, college preparation has slighted literature in favor of more "practical" subjects. A problem therefore arises as to what to give such students in order that they may derive maximum benefits from their study.

In life we hope that these men and women will read. We are sure, though, that they will not arbitrarily select specimens from the Anglo-Norman period because that period was a part of the survey course in college. Neither will they deliberately choose for recreational reading a specimen of Romanticism because they remember that Romanticism has six characteristics. They will, however, under normal conditions select a novel or play or poem casually and read it for the enjoyment that they find in it. And whether they enjoy things worth while will depend largely upon the exposure to and the intelligent treatment of a carefully selected group of readings

during their one period of opportunity while in college. It is a great responsibility, and if we fail we lose them forever.

The first thing we did was to eliminate the cumbersome anthology. The use of such a tome reduced the reading of literature to a series of textbook assignments, and, furthermore, it tied our hands. The next step was to discard the chronological survey. Instead, we gave the students real books to read, — two or three novels of compelling interest, a book of stimulating short stories, a small book of essays of the thought provoking variety, a book of plays, mostly modern, and a book of verse with more emphasis than usual on the narrative poetry. There was a mixture of old and modern; British and American. Organization of the materials followed lines of interest rather than logic.

Immediately we noticed that students were reading ahead of the assignments. Students confessed to reading their literature in preference to their other tasks. Students began carrying their pocket-sized books about with them, — to the movies to peruse while waiting for the show to start; to the laboratory to get a "shot" at them while waiting for an experiment to materialize. Next we encountered questions about more of the same types that hit their fancy. Converts to the curriculum in literature may be few, but converts to the cause of literature in the larger sense we commence to note with great satisfaction. Literature has a higher value than its factual aspects. We feel confident that this non-technical tasting of good literature will eventually tend to increase the demand for better books and go far toward clarifying the functions of the arts in a technical world.

—D. S. Mead,
Pennsylvania State

"Slanting" for Democracy

I believe we should not 'slant' our English composition courses for political purposes—for Democracy or any other political faith. I think we should 'stick to our lasts' and teach English composition and literature. When we read Thomas Paine we find one who presumably is democratic enough; when we come to Carlyle we encounter one who presumably is less democratic than we could wish, but both were equally bigoted in their points of view, and should be so presented with as much of Matthew Arnold's 'disinterestedness' as a teacher can achieve these days.

I think we are not qualified to go farther — to stream-line our courses, or our text books for Democracy, or to provoke economic or political altercations with our students in the classroom, since we can not honestly profess any scholarly competency in these subjects. We should be merely flooding these contentious fields with more emotion and prejudice, — which in these troublous days generate heat rather than light. We need at this time, when everyone is trying to boil everyone else in oil, rather to turn off the heat.

I take it that, as Walter Lippmann has been saying, and as Dr. Reynolds stated in his fine communication to the "News Letter," our students should study our heritage so that their opinions may have some basis in knowledge. They should not be plunged prematurely into the bewildering vortex of the contemporary scene, except under guidance of the competent.

—Robert M. Smith,
Lehigh University.

Hardy Collection

The year 1940 marked the centenary of Thomas Hardy. Last April the library of Colby College contributed to a memorial exhibition of the novels and poems of this English author,—an exhibition held at the Grolier Club in New York City. On the centenary anniversary Philip Brooks, writing in the New York Times Book Review said:

"The remarkable exhibition at the Grolier Club—sophisticated, full of fascinating association—makes just about the best one-man show that bibliographical ingenuity and organizing skill has yet devised. Richer and more detailed than the Hardy memorial exhibition at Yale in 1928, it serves to highlight the incidents of Hardy's life and career. . . . The explanatory cards provide a wealth of data not readily accessible elsewhere. . . . It is to be hoped that these . . . excellent notes will be preserved."

The librarian of Colby College is

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EQ 11 1941

University of Pennsylvania Library
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Editorial

The wieldy size of our organization makes it possible to try an experiment in democracy—a town meeting form of control over a representative system. Our constitution provides for the reference of questions affecting all the members to a vote of the membership. The ballots which were sent out have been coming in with commendable promptness—one third of our enrollment is already in hand and counted; those who have not yet returned their ballots are urged to do so at once.

Our readers may be interested in the trend of the voting. One hundred and eighty-one ballots have been received, and of these 163 favor continuance as an independent organization, and 11 are opposed.

The eleven who are opposed favor merger with the National Council of Teachers of English.

Of those members who vote for continued independence, a great majority would like to see closer cooperation with one or the other of the larger and older societies. Fifty-two would like to see such closer cooperation with MLA, but not with NCTE. Thirty-seven would like to see the closer cooperation with NCTE, but not with MLA. Fifty-five would like to see us draw closer to both of them, and 31 wish us to avoid cooperation with either. One hundred and fifty favor Dean DeVane's suggestion of a greater emphasis upon regional meetings and less time and attention to the annual meeting. Twelve are opposed to this and wish the annual meeting to be emphasized more. Ninety-two prefer to have our annual meeting occur the day before or the first morning of the MLA program. Forty-four prefer using the day after the MLA program is over, this, of course, dependent upon practicability and convenience. One hundred fifteen favor the admission to membership of teachers in junior colleges. Forty-nine are opposed. One hundred sixty are in favor of accepting the offer of the University of Pennsylvania Press. Two are opposed, though some add the words, "If there is no joker in the offer," or "If the directors think it desirable." One hundred fifty-four wish to extend some sort of aid or offer of collaboration to the English Society of Great Britain, though

several accompany a favorable vote with such comments as "If it is deeds and not words," "How could it be done?"; "I am opposed to any bargain whereby CEA members get articles published in a British periodical in return for aid."

According to our constitution this vote will determine such questions as the admission of teachers from junior colleges, and the emphasis upon regional meetings. In the matter of time of the annual meeting it can serve no more than as a recorded expression of preference addressed to our local and program committees who are making plans for our Indianapolis meeting next December. The directors must be guided by it in acting upon the offer of the University of Pennsylvania Press, and in further inquiries addressed to the officers of the British Society.

As to our continuance as an independent organization the will of the great majority is very clear. It is also clear that a majority of the members desire to see us build up closer and more cooperative relations to one or the other of the two older and larger societies without sacrifice of our independence, but there is evidently sharp difference of opinion as to which one. Wise directors guided by such an expression of opinion are likely to see that the best course is an independent one, allowing any developing relationship to depend upon developing circumstances and upon the attitude of each of those organizations toward us.

To make such a device for democratic control of our organization effective, it would be essential to submit only such questions of policy as have been first carefully considered by a group of members, fully presented and discussed in the News Letter, and then so worded that Yes and No votes would register the unmistakable will of the majority.

—Secretary pro tem.

Owing to the space limits of the "News Letter" certain arbitrary regulations have evolved. First, only such material shall be included as applies directly to our problems as teachers of English in undergraduate colleges. Second, whatever is to be said must be said within a limit of 1,000 words. Third, we cannot afford the space to reprint from other periodicals, however important that material may be to us. We can only call attention to the material and tell our members how it may be secured.

But rules which result from expediency and not from the action of a board of directors are made to be broken if occasion demands. We are reprinting in this issue an article from the *Saturday Review of Literature* with only two brief excisions; first because we were asked to do so by one of our members in the West who felt that the article was particularly applicable to our needs; second, because it is

written by a CEA member, Christopher Morley, who has been interested in the welfare of our young organization since its beginnings; and third, because it would be a pity not to reprint it when we have Mr. Morley's cordial permission to do so.

Twentieth-Century Literature

A. C. Ward, Longmans, Green and Company. New York, 1940.

Now in its seventh edition, this book is a useful survey of the "novelists, dramatists, poets, essayists, critics, travellers, and biographers," who have contributed to English literature in our time. Mr. Ward's judgments are well considered, and sometimes unorthodox, as when he calls T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* "only a constipated masterpiece."

To an American reader, it seems strange that George Moore, a great artist, should receive a single brief paragraph, while Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy, and Conrad are awarded separate sections of several pages each. It is also strange and misleading to an American reader that the inclusive title "Twentieth Century Literature" should be given to a book which ignores all literature this side of the Atlantic. Certainly Mr. Ward, or his publishers, should have changed the title to "Twentieth Century Literature in England"—especially since the book is offered for sale in this country.

—Harold Blodgett

The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton (the new Cambridge edition) edited by Harris Francis Fletcher, 574 pages, illustrated, \$2.80.

Since the decline of book-binding as a handicraft, our book-buying public is failing to appreciate the relationship between the outward appearance of books and their contents. There are still a few old binders, artists in their fields, who would be deeply hurt if asked to bind the *Ingoldsby Legends* in black, or Trollope in red. There is no traditional format for Milton, but it is so much of a pleasure to see his poetical works bound with the beauty and the dignity they demand, with typography to match, that superficial appearance is given first place in this brief comment.

Professor Fletcher of the University of Illinois is widely recognized as a Milton scholar. He has prepared an authoritative text, taking advantage of the latest researches in a field that has yielded so richly to modern research, carrying down even to the present moment.

The general organization of William Vaughn Moody's Cambridge edition has been retained, although the biographical introduction has been rewritten. Illustrations, textual notes, and bibliography make the volume richly adequate as a textbook, without affecting its claim to high place in a general library.

—B. J.

Brevity

A note in the February *News Letter* urging on contributors the beauties of brevity has made me wonder how rigorous a training in compression the present-day college student is getting within his writing classes. The daily theme—five themes a week, one page a theme—was in its day an able discourager of verbosity. Its day, however, seems to be past, at least in the colleges with which I am acquainted. Does it survive anywhere? Where it does not, has any similar discipline taken its place? It would be interesting to learn from instructors engaged in teaching composition what amount of writing is done by their students and into what units that amount is divided. It might be not only interesting but highly useful to *News Letter* readers to learn also—and from many institutions—what premises the decisions concerning amount and divisions of amount are based.

—Edith Mirrielees
Stanford University

The *New York Herald-Tribune* has brought together in pamphlet form three biographical sketches or profiles with bibliography, by Stephen Vincent and Rosemary Benet, originally published in the book section of the *Herald-Tribune*. The titles in this first pamphlet are "Van Wyck Brooks: A Portrait Study"; "Jan Struther: Is She Miniver?"; and "Margaret Armstrong: Success at Seventy." A second booklet is also available, made up of six critical views. They cover the theater, Richard Watts Jr.; the screen, Howard Barnes; music, by Virgil Thomson; literature, by Lewis Gannett; the dance, by Walter Terry; and art, by Royal Cortissoz. The first four appeared in the weekly *Herald Tribune* and the last two from Sunday issues.

Teachers who would find the small pamphlets useful in the classroom may obtain any necessary quantity without cost by writing Mitchell R. Syrek, Educational Department, N. Y. *Herald-Tribune*, 230 W. 41st Street, New York City and mention the *News Letter*.

Outgoing Mail

The College English Association accepts with pleasure the invitation of the President, Trustees and Faculties of Fordham University to attend the celebration of the centenary of the University of September 15th, 16th and 17th of this year.

The College English Association congratulates the officers and faculties of a distinguished institution of learning upon the completion of a century of high service and desires to inform the Anniversary Committee that it will be represented at the ceremonies by the Reverend Hugh McCarron, S.J. of Loyola College, Baltimore, director of this association since its beginning.

Broken English

By Christopher Morley

(This essay is protected by copyright and may be reprinted only by permission of the author and The Saturday Review of Literature.)

The great anthology of literature of which I have dreamed so long under the title of "Broken English" will, I suppose, never be accomplished. It would contain as much bad grammar as good and almost as much comedy or ribaldry as beauty. When I think of it as "Broken English" I mean our language broken apart to reveal its multitude of moods and uses. An F.B.I. Notice on the Post Office bulletin board describing a fugitive bandit (there is one at this present time in a Long Island Post Office telling how he may be recognized by a peculiar tear in the back of a leather zipper jacket) would be not less eloquent to my purpose than Milton's description of his dangerous tall angel. Casual or indignant letters from friends, memoranda left on the kitchen table by the maid, bond-sellers' allocutions, conversation overheard in the subway, Western Union form telegrams—and so forth. Humanity struggling to express, impress, or repress would cry its whole gamut in my imagined scrapbook. I realize of course that such an album-nigrum would be embarrassment of riches; it would be life itself.

But even to suggest it can do no harm. For my momentary parallel I go to one of the most interesting engagements of classroom technique, the supreme example of a kind of literary teaching, viz., a theatrical company of young actors. In any other field of the arts discipline may break down, as it has so widely broken down in later years. It cannot do so in the theatre without artistic catastrophe. It is the director's job not only to teach the performer what he is thinking, but every mortal symptom of that thought. The actor may possibly be more sensitive or intelligent than the director (or the author) but for the moment discipline is paramount. The director has made it his business to form a picture and plan; every individual impulse must be subordinate to the not impossible audience.

In such a task one learns how lovably the English teaching of this generation has done its work. The mere presence of a group of young actors in the theatre might imply that they at least have ambition, yet four out of seven can scarcely read English text above the guttural and intellectual frontier of the tabloids. Any word not frequent in Winchell seems unknown to them, and they have little conception of the thousand discriminations of accent, posture, physiognomy, and enunciation which are the tit-tat-toe of the stage. What conclusion can there be but that their English teachers never gave them the prime idea of human feeling is the punctuation of literature?

Is it possible, I say to myself, that so many readers do not realize that almost every piece of writing

which can stand as an integer is consciously or unconsciously plotted as warily as a stage play? Look through any anthology of verse and see how many formal lyrics have three stanzas, just as the modern play has tried to crystallize itself in triplicate. They have three stanzas because they must: as the commonest form of musical rhythm embodies three impulses in a four-time frame. It is not unknown that most enduring forms of folk art, whether fairy tales or vulgar anecdotes, build their crescendo in three steps. For compromise with the necessities of occasion this pattern will often be evaded, but instinctively it is usually there. In the case of the theatre the entrepreneur considering the physical convenience of the customers allows them time out at comfortable intervals. But this is equally necessary in literature too. Poe's paradox about there being no such thing as a great poem more than one hundred lines long, viz., that high fidelity reception in the mind is limited and brief—is worth remembering.

So I remind myself that the first lesson in our literary paradigm is to consider human communication as a part of human biology. In every written text which deserves print there were reasons for its being done the way it was. To examine and relish some of those reasons gives the student his godlike purview.

There is an old theatrical superstition that it is well before a play opens to sprinkle salt on the stage. These notes of ricochet are an attempt to sprinkle a little salt on the noble drama of teaching English.

At this moment I feel as though the only textbook necessary for freshmen in the English language would be *Hamlet*. Its very second speech—"Answer me: stand and unfold yourself"—is the text of freshman year. And every student sensitive enough to deserve the name is probably in *Hamlet* mood.

Every other education can be yours too if you wish. I am thinking of Hogg's extraordinary description of Shelley's short time at Oxford. I am thinking of the upstairs room in a London lodging—now perhaps fallen in splinters—where a young man came upstairs and found his medical-student roommate sitting at the window lost in thought as he watched dust motes sparkling in one of London's scanty slants of sunshine. The medical student started from his reverie and remarked casually, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." I am thinking how young Coleridge, a boy at Cambridge, was captivated by the magic of a word. That word, as was his habit, he magnified and illuminated with all his private dreams. The word was *Susquehanna*. Nearly a century and a half later you will find, if you care to, the downward valleys of that stream all the more lovely because Coleridge—however absurdly—had dreamed them.

In all the intricate mechanism and fabrication of industry there is no processing so efficient, so marketable, as what literature can do to preserve and distribute emo-

tion. No cellophane wrapper keeps the goods so intact.

Not every student is likely to be a young Shelley, Keats, or Coleridge; certainly few would wish to undergo, even if offered at free choice, the alternating currents of the fully creative mind. But not to be aware of such human sensibilities is to live on a stage half lit. Before the enormous weight of human mediocrity and nonsense dulls your fresh indignant feelings now is your chance.

My favorite apothegm coined for myself is, Dogs don't bark at the milkman. The routine of Harvard and Yale is perhaps as prosaic and scheduled as that of Sheffield and Borden; but only the ill-conditioned mongrel snaps too persistently at their heels.

In the Susquehanna dream valley of youth whatever accident happens is probably lucky. It may be a particular alcove in a library, it may be some felicitous bull-session, it may be some unrequired assignment. It might even be the suggestion, if you reach it quickly enough, that every great literature was written intentionally for you. When Swift was describing Gulliver bound down in the trivial twine of Lilliput it was not just an amusing episode but a warning to ourselves. Every ingenuity that the dwarfs of the world can muster will be wrapped around you to keep you helpless.

To study literature in a volume of selections is about as practical as studying a forest in a cord of firewood. I remember a college professor who used to surprise the neighbors on a conventional city street by having a wagon-load of firewood delivered onto the pavement because he so enjoyed heaving it into the cellar himself. This under artificial conditions was as close to actuality as he could get; he could not fell and split the timber. College courses in the same way deliver well trimmed fagots and kindling; we are permitted or encouraged to stack them neatly in formal bins. But it is important to realize that those bins are only for convenience. The angry humor of the journalist Hazlitt makes him more contemporary of today than many people now writing. One wishes that the silver buckle he once lost in the sand of Cape Cod might be rediscovered as a talisman. Perhaps no writer was ever more violently conscious of his moments than Hazlitt; his mind skated on so crystalline an ice of consciousness that he often broke through and interrupted what he was thinking by an uncontrollable ejaculation of how he felt. Every teacher of composition would naturally protest this; it was bad composition but exquisite literature. The teacher's job is to drill mediocrity. Anything better than mediocrity undergoes the sore problem of drilling itself.

Mediocrity thinks of life as weight to be endured, but it can also be thought of as a plastic to be moulded.

We were not speaking of the woodpile in any condensation. The cord of wood seasoning in afternoon has its own special charms—

a perfume all its own, and the activity of interesting critical insects. One could spend (and many do) a happy life in shelter alongside the woodpile without ever having explored the forest alive. Virgil comes to my mind. The way we encounter him he is stacked up like planks at the saw mill. How rarely do we consider what must have been the joy and reach and curiosity of his mind as he laid the red-hot metal of Roman history on his secret anvil and hammered out his armored works. "Bronze trumpets and sea-water," said Elinor Wylie, "were the symbols of the Latin tongue," showing in that phrase her own imperial insight. One must not depend on organized teaching for that kind of insight. It is the excitement of the student to divine it for himself. It is the excitement of the true teacher to try to help.

Teaching Criticism

Might not an attempt to clarify the teaching of criticism be a good one for the *News Letter* to make this year?

I am sure that many teachers would be glad to hear from others on the subject. Everyone appears to be agreed that it is important, but no one knows exactly what to do about it.

I should like to know what to do with the History of Criticism to keep it from seeming to the student to be, as one bright girl said on a final examination paper, "a semester spent in setting up and knocking down straw men."

I should like to know what experience others have had in Discriminative or Intensive Reading, as a foundation for criticism. I mean the sort of thing represented by Richard's *Practical Criticism*, Biaggini's *Reading and Writing of English*, Thompson's *Reading and Discrimination*. By what steps are students led from the study of short specimens to the appreciation or judgment of wholes—novels, plays, long poems?

Finally, I should like to know what others think about this: Should we try to inculcate general principles at all, or should we be content to stop with the study or discrimination of meaning? As for general principles, I am reminded of the anecdote about Tom Sheridan who, when his father said, "Tom, you must take a wife," replied, "Very well, father, and whose wife shall I take?"

—R. M. Gay
Simmons College

Rogers - Haydn - Redinger

Explorations in Living

A Record of the Democratic Spirit

A stimulating and timely anthology for college freshmen; a book of great literature.

TO APPEAR IN APRIL

Reynal & Hitchcock, New York

Why Teachers After All?

(An undergraduate writes in)

About a year ago Mortimer Adler wrote a book on *How to Read a Book*. I have read only at random from it and intend in no way to criticize either what was said about the subject, or whether it was wise to say anything about it at all. I know that when I saw the book I felt an instinctive distaste. One does not speak of things being instinctive anymore, but I immediately felt that it was more or less an effrontery, for anyone to tell me how to read. That sort of thing reminds me all too vividly of the hours I have spent in what my teachers called "speeding up my reading time." If anyone ever tries again to mechanize my reading by that barren and unpleasant process, I shall tell him that I read for my own pleasure, and do not intend to be made uncomfortably self-conscious if I stop now and then to spell out a word or two. I might go on to write a vituperous essay along these lines, but it is not at all what I started out to do. Neither do I want to continue about Mortimer Adler, who, far from trying to speed up one's reading time, is doing what in part appears to be a healthy work. This is all by way of noticing that lately there has been an alarming number of books about how to handle almost any problem. Our libraries are full of books which are not only the original works of fine art, but translations of those books (if they are foreign), and commentaries on them, books on how to read both the originals and the commentaries, and commentaries on books about how to read books. This strikes me as being a singularly all-inclusive store of information. I do not want to suggest that this profusion of "books about books" has been in any way caused by the failure of teachers in colleges and universities to do their jobs as teachers; or that the job of teaching is thereby made invalid. On the contrary, teaching has a legitimacy all its own. It is to show to a group of people, by means of one's physical presence and all the faculties which that presence commands, something which presumably they would not see by any other means. But it is inevitable that this sort of book will appear as long as writers feel free to write on any subject which interests them. I would not in any way try to limit that freedom. The point is that libraries are constantly including a wider and wider scope of information, so that almost any fact can be found there with infinitely less trouble than it requires to attend a series of lectures on a given subject. It occurs to me that the problem for the teacher who allows himself to admit that a problem exists, is all too clearly defined. The question is—Why teachers after all? If that can be answered satisfactorily it must be answered by an attitude which refuses to reduce the teacher to the function either of repeating what has been said in books, or of acting as a kind of "living guide to good reading." The necessity for the former is, of course, eliminated by the library itself. The latter might be

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An Omnibus Course For Young Engineers

Here is a course of outside reading, or even a course of study, planned for young engineers or science majors, whose liberal studies may be well nigh swamped by a flood of technical courses. It is offered, in response to challenge, by two members of the Vassar English faculty, who may be a little better able than others to view such a problem objectively. Discussion would be stimulating. —Ed.

The theme is: the individual and society, as conceived in various periods by the most articulate men and those with self-consciousness enough to see the meaning of their age; that is, the great poets and other writers. We had a group of engineers in mind, for they most of all need some perspective of humanism. One might begin with *Fortune*; i. e., their world as expressed for the rulers of America, their world in terms of the drama of success. Then one would throw back to Homer, the *Iliad* probably, where also heroes were successful in a primitive society, and consider what they were, what were their relationships with others, with strange tribes and with nature. Then might come one or two of the simpler Arthurian romances, chosen from Malory or some other well translated book, and then down through Europe to the highly self-conscious aviator of the most individualistic nation of the 20th century, with his almost unique poetical sense of his tools—airplanes—his comrades, the space of the earth and its laws.

The new world is taking shape in America in terms of new people, new alignments and highly organized groups together with the interpretation of nature by the scientific method. In our world your engineers have a role, a role that should be seen in terms of their fellowmen as well as of the measurement of physical forces. Therefore the whole range of humanist literature should be open to them, in the hope that it would provide some social motivation.

The following list provides an outline which, of course, will be modified according to specific material in the way of faculty and students:

Fortune.

Homer.

Two, or possibly, three Greek tragedies, such as Aeschylus, *Prometheus* or *Agamemnon*.

Euripides, *Medea* or the *Trojan Women*.

Arthurian romance.

More's *Utopia*.

Bacon's *New Atlantis*.

As much of the Bible as seems advisable.

Milton's *Areopagitica*.

Swift, *Gulliver*, probably.

Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence*.

Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, and

possibly a good life of Lincoln.

Tolstoy, *War and Peace*.

Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People*.

Hauptmann, *The Weavers*.

Shaw, *Arms and the Man*, *Saint Joan*.

St. Exupery, *Wind, Sand and Stars*.

Adamic, *From Many Lands*.

Berle, *New Directors for a New World*.

Another course of a somewhat similar character, but much narrower in scope, based on American literature with an emphasis on the contemporary, of the kind that we use in Freshmen English sometimes, would be enlightening for such young men. We should begin with some contemporary novels that are not too doleful; for instance, Ellen Glasgow's *Vein of Iron* is preferable to Dos Passos' *The Big Money*. In such a course some poets, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Archibald MacLeish's early poems (especially *The New Found Land*) would be used, so would a good many of our very excellent prose discussions of the state of the country: i. e., Stuart Chase's *Tragedy of Waste*, and other works; etc. Among plays, a comparison of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* with Peter's and Sklar's *Stevodore* would be rewarding; similarly a comparison of Max Anderson's *Gods of the Lightning* with *Winterset* and the background of Sacco and Vanzetti's letters. Such material could be successfully chosen to give the kind of motivation that we all want our young people to get, and there is certainly a wide choice open to alert minds.

We have done a good deal with inter-departmental courses here, and believe that this kind of course, not bound by graduate school formulae, will become more and more useful in our colleges. In a forthcoming short article in the *Classical Journal* a course in tragedy, Greek, Renaissance and modern is described, which has been taught with our Greek Department for the past few years. The advantage of such cooperative work is that it helps teachers to expand their resources and it gives students an idea that learning is all one.

—Winifred Smith
—Helen Lockwood
—Vassar College

English and the Humanities

(Continued from page 1)

ories of classical antiquity. The welfare of English as an academic subject is closely bound up with the welfare of the Classics, of the Romance languages and literatures, of the German language and literature.

But the Classics, once dominant in our education, have become a mere saving remnant; the modern foreign languages have, relatively to other subjects, steadily lost ground; and English, which grew at the expense of other languages and literatures, has recently been in danger of entering upon a similar decline, or of being retained principally for trivial ends.

In this situation, teachers of English can serve their own subject in a fundamental way, and at the same time serve the embattled humanities, by seeking opportuni-

ties to support the claims, in education, of the other languages and literatures, and also of the arts and philosophy.

Would the members of the CLA like to see this question studied by a committee on Cooperation with Related Humanities?

—Norman Foerster

Hardy Collection

(Continued from page 1)

happy to be able to announce that this hope of a printed catalogue of the exhibited works of Thomas Hardy is about to be realized. Dr. Carroll A. Wilson, an honorary graduate of Colby College, who assembled and arranged "the remarkable exhibition at the Grolier Club," has since prepared a descriptive catalogue in which all the "wealth of data not readily accessible elsewhere" has been placed permanently on record. The catalogue has been attractively printed by the Southworth Press of Portland, Maine, with many splendid illustrations. The Colby Library, having made a modest contribution to the treasures loaned to the Grolier Club last spring, is confident that it is now rendering a more important, and certainly a more permanent, service in the publication of this descriptive catalogue. In view of the fact that no definitive bibliography of Thomas Hardy has yet been published, scholars and students of this author will find the present Grolier catalogue an extraordinarily useful reference work.

The catalogue will be sold for \$1.50 per copy net. Checks should be made payable to "Colby College Library."

N. ORWIN RUSH, Librarian
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Teacher English

(The following extracts are culled from current text-books, mostly books for teachers by teachers. Nothing is to be gained by citing chapter and verse; but all are authentic.—Ed)

* *

"Assuming a fairly sound physical and mental inheritance on the part of the child, and the given environment as the raw material of construction, what ideals should a teacher have uppermost in mind before undertaking the tremendously important and interesting duties of constructing worthy manhood and womanhood out of the inherent nature of their children?"

* *

"And second, to suggest a technique for the study of the family life in any community, so that due regard may be allowed for by the school in any particular community for the family influences in the education of children."

* *

"With regard to curriculum building and curriculum planning this means that though the particular contents of any particular evolving curriculum are determined by the continuity of experience in the corresponding unit of educational practice, on the whole certain fundamental experiences of knowing and experiencing, as well as some basically important subject matters, should serve as guidelines by which learning of a more permanent value and extensive application can be elicited from occupations of an immediate character."

* *

"As the task of the school is to guide the growth of children, the school must be sensitive to the ways of becoming of those characteristics of growth that are the results of long periods of experience."

* *

"Some one brain process is always preponent above its concomitants in arousing action elsewhere."

* *

"Each total situation—response and is composed of minor bonds from parts of the situation to parts of the response, because man's native equipment of sensory neurones is such a set of analytical organs as it is, and because his connecting neurones are such a mechanism as they are for converging and distributing the currents of conduction set up in these sensory neurones."

* *

"Contentual aims are of necessity pluralistic, as is, in fact, any concrete actuality. The unity, and the logical as well as the philosophical consistency that is sought in educational directives are not to be looked for in the contents of any particular aims held; they are to be found in a balance of divergent directions effected by criticism based on functional and methodological standards of judgment. This involves a consistent thinking

through of the meanings and consequences of different particular aims in relation to each other, in relation to what at any particular moment is held as most valuable in life, and in relation to the liberating power of the educative experiences promoted by the aims held."

"Infant Behavior:

- 12 weeks Transient regard for pellet (rarely).
- 16 weeks More prolonged regard, usually delayed.
- 20 weeks Immediate, definite regard, sometimes with increased hand-arm activity.
- 24 weeks Approaches pellet with pronate hand; contacts pellet with little or no finger adjustment.
- 28 weeks Approaches pellet with raking flexion of fingers, without thumb opposition; occasional delayed palmar prehension.
- 32 weeks Approaches pellet with raking flexion but with increased thumb participation and digital prehension.
- 40 weeks Approaches with all fingers extended; contacts with index finger and later prehends by drawing index finger against thumb.
- 44 weeks Promptly prehends with index and thumb and with increased obliquity of hand attitude.
- 48 weeks Approaches with index finger extended and lateral digits flexed; prehends with delimitate plucking by index and thumb.
- 52 weeks Approaches and plucks pincer-wise with increased deftness."

(Editorial note: Thank Heaven! The baby got the pill.)

Out of the Past

In 1723 the Reverend Cotton Mather brought the following charges against Harvard College: that there has been "a sensible and notorious decay" of "solid learning", that the speaking of Latin had been "discountenanced", that "the Tutors often make the pupils get by heart a deal of insipid stuff and trash, that they bid them at the same time to believe nothing of it," that "the books mostly read among them are . . . plays, novels, empty and vicious pieces of poetry, and even Ovid's Epistles, which have a vile tendency to corrupt good manners"; and finally, most modern charge of all, that "many godly persons in the country have . . . with sad hearts lamented it that their children, who have left their families with some Gospel symptoms of piety upon them, after they came to live at college do quickly lose all, and neither do nor hear any more such things as they had before they went from home."

from "Cotton Mather: Keeper of the Puritan Conscience"; by Ralph and Louise Boas. Harper & Bros.

Non-Fiction Prize For Teachers

A prize of \$2,500 for the best non-fiction, book-length manuscript, to be submitted in complete form before Sept. 1, 1941, by a member of an American college or university staff, is announced by Messrs. Raynal & Hitchcock, publishers.

The book which the publishers are seeking is one written for the general reader, not a textbook or professional book. The hope is to find a really original and distinguished piece of work covering a field of serious interest in a style sufficiently clear and untechnical and provocative to appeal to the intelligent lay reader. The last thing that is desired is "popularization" in anything but the best sense. To qualify for the prize the author should write as for his intellectual peers although avoiding such technicalities as would be understood only by his colleagues in his own field. Preference will naturally be given to the work which is intellectually stimulating and exciting in both style and content as against that which is merely factually informative.

The book may be either a survey of the existing knowledge in a given field or the exposition of an original thesis of the author in some chosen part of that field. The only requirement as to subject matter is that it have genuine significance and be sufficiently wide in its range to touch the interests of non-professionals. It may be historical, biographical, descriptive, analytical or narrative or a combination of any of them. It may be in the field of art, literature, social or natural science—anywhere in the general range of the humanities.

The judges in the contest will be Henry Seidel Canby, Carl Van Doren and William Allan Neilson.

In addition to the board of three judges, one expert in each of the fields involved will be called upon to read the manuscripts which are selected for final consideration for the prize award.

The prize will be \$2,500, payable on the announcement of the award, of which one-half will be an outright sum and the balance an advance on account of normal royalties against book rights. All subsidiary rights will be the author's.

The publishers also plan to offer publishing contracts for manuscripts submitted in the contest other than the prize winner, the terms of publication to be arranged between authors and publishers at their mutual convenience.

In the event that no manuscript is submitted which the judges deem worthy of a prize, the publishers reserve the right to withhold the award.

Candidates for the prize are requested to submit their names, addresses, and academic rank to the publishers, Raynal & Hitchcock, Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City, who will be glad to answer any questions.

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Why Teachers at All?

(Continued from page 4)

effectively replaced by a carefully prepared reading list, neatly typed and pinned on the library bulletin board. It ought to take about three days to work up such a list. The rest of their socially necessary labor time the faculty could spend at home being comfortable and kindly moral advisers to the students.

But there is an answer which satisfies me: that teaching is not a matter of pedantry, or even of imparting scholastic data. It is the gift of inspirational imagination of the trained and excited mind of the teacher to a pupil or class who is at least to some degree familiar with the facts of the case at hand. And if one admits to the critic any *raison d'être*, even great books are vitalized by that teacher who is able to bring to the subject the sensitive impressions of his mind, enforced by his own personality. For teaching is a fine art. And unless it can incorporate into its tremendous background of fact those modes of presentation which are individual (in the apt, and not the perverted sense of the word), unless it can encourage rather than limit the ability of the student to build into the subject his own individuality or sensitivity, it is better abandoned as a thing in itself. For only in these ways does the element of creation enter into learning, or does knowledge as apart from an accumulation of past fact and theory have any meaning. So much of all that is valuable in teaching depends upon the imagination which goes beyond the stability of the library. And it is an accomplishment to inspire the love of a thing, without which all learning is barren. For learning as such may be accomplished by repetition, but that kind of zeal which leads to intuition does not always come to the person alone with his books.

I have had few teachers in all, but the ones who deserve to be called by that name I remember because of an attitude of mind they brought about in me, and to them I shall always, however sentimentally, be devoted. There is, in that accomplishment, something rather fine that serves to make a mockery of the worn out phrase, "those who can, do; those who cannot, teach."

Frances Chichester '41
Sweet Briar College.

Notice to Members

The rank and file of members of CEA do not make sufficient use of the columns of this paper for brief inquiries, stimulating suggestions and those impulsive recordings of professional experience which make for wider professional acquaintance. Just as our advertisers testify to a most satisfactory reaction from readers, so those contributors who have sent in queries or proposed subjects for discussion have been gratified by a wide-spread response. The value of the paper to all members grows as this tendency develops. Do not allow your impulse to write a letter to the editor to die a-borning!

The Teaching of English Literature

In teaching a survey of English literature, I find that the student grasps the genius of written communication more adequately through the history of types of writing than through the traditional "century" method. The latter procedure generally verges so much on the archeological side that the student comes to consider writings of the past as museum pieces rather than as living progenitors of his own language.

When the student envisions on the sea of literature the cross-ruffing of the types of prose and verse on the shores of time, he acquires a more integrated notion of the "unity in variety" of communication. The hallowed system of teaching by periods of years, essentially an idealism since it attempts a Procrustean fitting of the facts to the categories, demands the collating of so many loose ends that the undergraduate is daunted by the magnitude of the task.

The work of the teacher of literary history should be centered on ideas, and on men as they further the development of ideas. No author is purely a romanticist, a classicist, a realist. To what he has gained from previous and contemporary works, a writer adds the fillip of his own genius resulting in a causative influence on his successors. Realizing this, the teacher should present to his students English literature in the types of expression that men have found appropriate for the communication of their ideas with proper allowance for the creative effort of the artist. Then we shall have the literature of the English language rather than a species of cemetery notable chiefly for its headstones.

—William C. Dwyer,
Duquesne University

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Dramatists' Alliance of Stanford University offers a sixth annual series of competitions in dramatic writing, closing date to be April 15, 1941. Since the University celebrates this year its first fifty years of service (1891-1941), writers are encouraged to use materials characters of the period covered. Awards of one hundred dollars cash and production at the University, with recommendation to Samuel French, National Broadcasting Company, American Educational Theatre Association, and the Community Playhouses at Pasadena are offered for verse, drama, prose comedy (full length or short act). Fifty dollars and the recommendations are offered for short plays taking twenty or twenty-five minutes, and suitable for radio use. Fifty dollars and recommendation in the Alliance's publications are offered for dramatic criticism (brief or extended).

All materials submitted should be legibly typed or written on one side of white sheets of paper, strongly clipped or bound, and accompanied by self-addressed envelope with correct return postage fee of one dollar is charged for expenses of annual correspondence, filing, express costs to judges and production centers. Prizes are presented in August during Dramatists' Assembly, annual meeting of contributors and general public, which winning plays are discussed and presented and general problems of theatre are canvassed.

Contests are open to all writers of English, regardless of age, nation, or previous training. For details of competition, publication of the association, and post membership, address the Program for Awards in Drama, English Department, Stanford University, California.

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